

KARMA.

BY THOMAS HORACE EVANS.

Oh! sing me of this law, who learest, Chaya,
That sittest 'neath the snow-topped Himalaya,
The law which places every thought of malice
Within the soul's inseparable chalice,
There to invest its secret and engender
Through eons, what its potency may render!

So it was Karma, if my heart believeth,
Which lost the path, and that again retrieveth;
And it was Karma, drawn of sinful ardor,
With swastika, inlaid of fiery color,
And saturated in the threefold yearning
Which wrought its desolate, ruinous returning!

"Lord Buddha," (it was asked of his disciples)
"What is the sin which this man's spirit stifles?"
For, in the gutter, as they passed, was lying
A drunken wretch, whose soul with beasts was vying.
And Buddha's answer came, "All else his spirit
Hath conquered, save this sin, ere he inherit

The eternal bliss. Superior to each other,
At heaven's door, this last his soul would smother;
But, overcome, within Nirvana's glory,
Sooner than ye, beyond the transitory
Round of earth's conflict, into Brahma's vaster
And freer realm he passes, as our Master!"

If his disciples marveled, yet to-morrow
Shall count its myriads chained of equal sorrow,

Each sin and wrong must find its full outworking,
 Nor least nor greatest aught of Karma shirking:
 Ah, Chaya, tell me of this law mysterious
 Which binds all humans in its will imperious!

The spirit fails not, though the sevenfold body
 Traces its devious-channeled palinody
 Within the sevenfold heart; to each form newer
 Is brought the accent in its concord truer;
 Each rift, each dissonance, the fire refining,
 Until the soul its purest be divining.

Dread Power! from whose line is no escaping,
 This clay which potter's hand and wheel are shaping,
 Out of what dim abyss the round diurnal
 Has raised the flower to its beauty vernal!
 The immortal eye of Buddha saw the portal
 Which likewise other souls shall make immortal.

And lo! the Chaya at his cavern seated,
 Where arch to arch of stone his task has meted,
 With steadfast, serious vision ever gazes
 Upon the inward spectacle that raises,
 Entranced, before his soul, the elevation
 Of future path's perpetual translation!

From life to life, from strife to strife, unfolding,
 As a rose, its petals murmuringly holding—
 As a star, its orbit spirally unwinding,
 Borne of the central sun its radius finding—
 As a flame, blown out, relights—the spirit breathing
 And on a swifter vehicle's essence wreathing!

As a kiss, its lover's might transferred, aërial,
 O'er bonds so frail they solve their ways ethereal—
 As a sigh, which stirs a world to heed its anguish—
 As a wish unspoken gives a soul to languish—
 As a ray of astral light this worm may capture,
 So Karma wields the gift of woe or rapture!

But how is graven its fine, immutable pattern?
 Of rose, ray, crystaled rhomb, or ringèd Saturn!

The invisible thread is woven thin and thinner
Than the charm of evil fastening the sinner—
Than the bane of destiny—than the long relation
Of universal spheres in gravitation—

Chaya! before the majesty of this presage,
As when Lord Buddha will reveal his message,
And, world to world, thy spirit's way endoweth
Of Him before whose will each world-force boweth—
Before whose love e'en Karma moulds its stamp,
Bend near my face that I may see thy lamp!